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Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony in Support of

House Bill 5893 An Act Requiring the Establishment of an Emergency Response System of Volunteer Health Care Providers

Public Safety Committee

February 10, 2009

Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety Committee, on behalf of the more than 7,000 members of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today in support of House Bill 5893 An Act Requiring the Establishment of an Emergency Response System of Volunteer Health Care Providers. Passing this legislation will strengthen Connecticut's ability to provide the highest quality of care quickly and efficiently in times of emergencies.

Although Connecticut has adopted the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), it only applies to state and local employees governed by mutual aid agreements. EMAC unfortunately fails to tap into the tremendous resources we have in our state through private sector volunteers that are so heavily relied upon by most disaster relief programs and entities such as the Red Cross.

Physicians throughout the country are seeking uniformity in Volunteer Emergency Response Laws. Volunteer Health Practitioners are typically deployed by source agencies located in multiple states and sent to host states when disasters occur. It is simply not feasible nor practical for agencies we depend on to focus their efforts on providing rapid, efficient, and quality services in disaster situations to be familiar with ever changing licensing and certification requirements in various states. Success depends on a simple, clear and automatically implemented system for Volunteer Healthcare Practitioners.

Physicians want to be a part of the emergency response system in Connecticut and to provide necessary, urgent and emergency care in times of disasters without fear of changes in licensure or law that could restrict their ability to provide assistance.

Please Support HB 5983